THE WAR FOR THE UNION.

GOOD NEWS FROM THE GULF

THE SECOND BOMBARDMENT AT FORT PICKENS.

A Breach Made in Fort Barrancas.

WARRINGTON BURNED TO THE GROUND.

THE AFFAIR AT SHIP ISLAND.

Capture of a Contraband Schooner.

A REBEL STEAMER PROBABLY TAKEN.

REBEL VESSEL BURNED AT FORT CASWELL.

Sailing of the Last of Burnside's Expedition.

FORTRESS MONROE, Jan. 16 — via BALTIMORE, Friday, Jan. 17, 1862.

The bark John Trucks, with the D'Epineuil Zouaves; the schooner Col. Satterly, with the Signal Corps of Gen. Burnside's expedition; the hospital ship of the expedition, and several other vessels of the fleet, left here with a favorable wind this forenoon.

The Constitution, from Boston, arrived here this forenoon. Her destination is unknown.

A French war steamer arrived below this afternoon, said to be the Guerriere de la Mer.

The regular Thursday flag of truce to-day took to Craney Island several passengers for the South. The boat brought back the following released prisoners:

Capt. Brewer, Quartermaster of the Rhode Island Brigade; Lieut. Knight of the 1st Minnesota Regiment; Capt. A. G. Kellogg of Company K, of the 2d Connecticut Regiment, and a private. Nineteen citizens also came over to go North.

The only news in the Southern papers is an exaggerated account of the affair between Humphrey Marshall and Col. Garfield, in which it is stated that the former was retreating when he was attacked. The fighting is said to have been very hot, and the rebels of course gained the victory with small loss.

One hundred and sixty prisoners of war are expected here to morrow, to be exchanged and sent North.

The gunboat Rhode Island arrived from Galveston this morning. Her dates are Galveston, Dec. 28; Ship Island and Mobile Bar Dec. 31; Fort Pickens, Jan. 2; Key West, Jan. 8; and Port Royal, Jan. 12. She brings a large mail.

The gunboats St. Louis, New London, and Water Witch left Ship Island for Biloxi Dec. 31. The result was not learned, but as the Rhode Island was leaving the New-London was seen returning with three schooners in tow. The schooner Venus was captured off Galveston by the Rhode Island. She was bound from Point Isabel for Franklin, La., with a cargo of tin, copper, lead, and wood, valued at $10,000. She was sent to Ship Island.

The rebel steamer Florida is inside Horn Island. The gun-boat Wissahickon is off that place.

The rebel batteries at Pensacola having repeatedly fired at our small vessels, Fort Pickens opened on the rebel steamer Times, which was loading stores at the Navy-Yard on the 1st of January. The rebel batteries responded, and the firing was continued until evening, Fort Pickens firing the last shot.

The rebel guns were well aimed, and most of their shells burst inside our fort. Only one of our men, however, was wounded. One of our shots made a large breach in Fort Barrancas. In the evening our firing set Warrington on fire. The conflagration continued all night, and the place was still burning on the evening of the 2d inst., when the Rhode Island left. The fire was seen at a distance of thirty-five miles at sea.

The Rhode Island will sail for Philadelphia this evening. In consequence of the fog she was detained off the Capes all day yesterday.

The Mount Vernon, which arrived here yesterday to coal, left her station off Wilmington, N. C., on the 12th inst.

The Chippewa and Monticello were off Cape Fear, and the Fernandina and Manda off New Inlet.

The Mount Vernon encountered the storm of Tuesday night, and arrived here yesterday afternoon. She saw part of the Burnside fleet off Hatteras.

The Mount Vernon reports that she burned a light ship on New-Year's night, which was being fitted out for a gunboat under the guns of Fort Caswell.

The rebel steamer Gordon is on the stocks for repairs, according to the reports of contrabands on board the Mount Vernon, on account of the damage received in her encounter with the Mount Vernon on December 15.

HOW THE FRENCH AND ENGLISH MAKE THEIR SOLDIERS.

Part I.—Their Musketry Instruction.

Excellent as the French soldier has always been, he will be found far superior by any future antagonist. The experience of the late Italian campaign has done far more for France, in the military point of view, than by the annexation of the two frontier provinces—masterly as must be considered this last "idea." That campaign—so equivocal in many respects—has not been left unmeditated by the military genius of France. A system of military instruction is now enforced, which bids fair to make the French soldier and the French officer the best in the world—thoroughly prepared in all the physical and mental requirements of the soldier.

England looks to her great rival in all her movements—ready to adopt—eager to imitate all that she proves to be worth adopting and imitating.

Most assuredly, the United States of America will not be in the rear of this great military development of England and France. All organization is necessarily a matter of time, and we must know the standard up to which we must organize; and such is the object of these pages, written in the earnest hope that they will aid in the development of that military capacity, second to none, which our soldiers have evinced under the fostering hand of the Government.

There are in France no less than nine military establishments whence emanate the proficients and instructors of the Army in all its departments—among the rest the famous School of Musketry at Vincennes. England has, in like manner, *two* such schools—one at Hythe and the other at Fleetwood, just established. Is not a school of musketry an imperative necessity for the Union? Perhaps the following account of the system of tuition pursued in these schools will prove beyond doubt the immense utility of the method, and recommend it for the adoption of the American people, as an aid to the full development of their destiny in the career chalked out for them by Providence.

France, as usual, started the idea, and England has adopted it with striking success. Some twelve hundred privates, non-commissioned officers, and officers, are annually trained in musketry at Hythe; as many more will be trained at Fleetwood; and in a few years every British soldier will be thoroughly instructed in the theory and practice of musketry, and thus be enabled efficiently to use the superior weapon now placed in his hands—the rifle. It will be abundantly proved in the sequel that without instruction, without training, the rifle will prove a worse arm in the hands of the soldier than the smooth-bore musket of old, with which England and France won their victories.

In the British and French Army the musketry instruction of the soldiers is conducted by a regular staff, placed under the responsibility of the commanding officer, who must give his personal superintendence to the drill and practice of the companies; and every officer of the regiment must render himself familiar with the theory and practice of musketry—attending the drill and practice in all its parts and requirements.

All the regulations of the British service in musketry instruction are borrowed from the French, but they are more stringently applied by the English, with the view of securing individual proficiency. Indeed, whereas in France, at present, only the Chasseurs battalions are provided with a staff of musketry instructors, every battalion of the British Army is so provided, and the annual training is most vigorously enforced.

At the French School of Musketry only officers are instructed, whereas at Hythe and Fleetwood both privates and officers are trained together, with obvious advantages; the officer at once applies his knowledge, learns the method of instruction, works with the men, and thus becomes master of his art, not without certain experiences which prove that, if he necessarily excels the private in certain points, he is only second to him in others—a powerful motive for that kind forbearance so essential to a good officer.

The teachers, according to the Hyde system, do not address their pupils as soldiers, but rather as *men*. They know that the brain and the mind are the rudder of a man—that a man shoots, in fact, with his mind—his bodily members being merely the servants of that mind when they are trained into subjection to it. They strive to interest and "enlist" the mind of the soldier, and so make the whole man obedient to their instruction.

The whole instruction of musketry is divided into two parts—"Preliminary Drill" and "Practice." Under the first is comprised instruction in: 1—The Cleaning of Arms; 2—Theoretical Principles; 3—Aiming Drill; 4—Position Drill; 5—Snapping Caps; 6—Blank Firing; 7—Judging Distance Drill; 8—The Manufacture of Cartridges. The "Practice" consists of: 1—Firing Singly; 2—Firing by Files; 3—Firing in Volleys; 4—Firing in Skirmishing Order; 5—Judging Distance Practice at Unknown Distances; 6—Firing without using the Back-Sight of the Rifle.

Under the head "cleaning of arms" a great amount of military and scientific knowledge is comprehended. The soldier is taught the names and uses of the different parts of the lock and rifle, and the rules for cleaning and keeping them in proper order. Too much pains cannot be taken to impress upon the minds of the men the necessity of preserving their rifles at all times in the highest condition, and the impossibility of producing accurate shooting with them when dirty. As there are no less than 130 different parts in the rifle—each with its distinct name and function—it is obvious that some effort of will and memory is required to retain them. Yet this is required of the British soldier, and no non-commissioned officer or private is even allowed to remove his lock from the stock and take it to pieces, until he is thoroughly acquainted with all the instructions in detail, and has been officially certified by the officer-instructor to be capable of doing so accurately and efficiently.

The lectures on theoretical subjects are illustrated by diagrams and by models. The men are catechized on these topics, and thus become intelligent shots. It is not enough that a man should be merely a good shot. It is not enough that he is able to hit his mark: he must know why he hits or misses it.

The instructor explains to the soldier the construction of his rifle-barrel, and the reasons of its peculiar shape, with reference to aiming. He informs him of the laws which influence the bullet in its flight through the air; and that, in consequence of these laws, if he were to direct the axis of his piece straight upon any object, he would never strike the very point at which it was directed, even at the distance of one yard. He thus perceives the absolute necessity for "elevation"—that is, directing the muzzle of the rifle above the object or point to be hit. Indeed, the immense difference between the instruction in shooting of the present day and the teaching (if there were any) of former days, may be summed up in one word—"elevation." Hence, the soldier is shown how elevation is obtained, and the absolute necessity for it.

As to "aiming," it is necessary that the soldier should have a distinct view of the object he wishes to strike, that he should be capable of forming an alignment from his eye, through the bottom of the notch of his back-sight, to the tip of the fore-sight, and the object. It appears that, just in proportion to the impression made on his brain, so is his power to strike. If we take out a soldier on a cloudy, dull day, and place him 500 yards from a figure dressed in a brown great-coat, with a dark back-ground, then give him twenty rounds, and let him fire, and count the number of hits; and afterward, if we take the same man out on a clear day, and let the object be dressed in a white smock-frock, placed in front of a black back-ground, he would assuredly hit the stuffed figure many more times than he did on the previous occasion. Now, he has not become a better shot, but he has received a clearer impression on his brain, which has enabled him to hit his object more frequently. This admits of easy proof, by having a telescope so fitted on a rifle that aim can be taken through it, when the object will decidedly be more frequently struck.

Again, the difficulty of shooting consists, not in merely taking aim (which may be and is always taught), but no man living can retain an aim. Hence, the accuracy of shooting consists in firing when you have the proper aim, and so the English, most judiciously, never use the word "FIRE" to the soldier. There is no such word in their instructions—simply because *you* cannot tell a man when to fire. It is a transaction between his own mind and finger. A man receives the word of command from his own brain; and just in proportion to the promptitude of that mental word of command, will be the accuracy of his shot. A person who can fire remarkably well at short, frequently fails to hit at long ranges. He has no misgivings when to press the trigger at short distances, but has at long ranges, because, in the latter case, a more vague impression of the object is made upon his brain. Hence, a very important part of the soldier's instruction is "Eye-drill;" for the eye—like the brain—is as capable of being strengthened as a man's arms or legs.

It is quite an error to suppose that the command "Fire!" is absolutely necessary to ensure the simultaneous fire of a company or battalion. Nothing can exceed the splendid rhythm of the volley firing of British battalions, wings, or companies. Pauses of slow time are counted after the word "Present!" has been given, and at the *fourth* every man presses the trigger—*keeping the eye steadfastly fixed upon the object*—for no British soldier must ever fire, even with blank cartridge, without taking aim at some object with the sights adjusted for the ordered distance.

"Aiming Drill" is taught by the aid of tripods and sand bags, on which the rifle is placed, and then by taking aim at a mark. This is done at seventeen distances (three daily), 50 yards apart, from 100 to 900 yards. There are dozens of men who at first cannot aim at all: they have not the power of forming a correct line with the eye, the sights, and the object, because the organ has never been *thus* exercised; but aiming can be and is taught by "Aiming Drill." This exercise is well calculated to strengthen the vision, and it cannot be too strongly impressed on the mind of the soldier that, to shoot well at long ranges, he must train and strengthen his eye by looking at small objects at distances beyond those at which he will have to fire in practice.

The next drill is what is called "Position Drill," and in it are included all those parts of the platoon exercise which affect the destination of the bullet. The soldier is placed in, and habituated to, the best position for independent firing, as if actually firing ball—minute attention being paid to every motion. The object of "Position Drill" is to establish an instantaneous connection between his eye and his finger.

The British soldier, whether standing or kneeling, has but one mode of firing. If he has to fire to the right or left oblique, he is faced accordingly, and fires at his ease. It is obvious to all who have seen the constrained positions as required by the oblique line of the American line, that no effective aim can result, while there is evident danger of hitting the muzzles on the right or left of the firer.

If we tell a man that he cannot fire accurately because he cannot press the trigger when he chooses, because there is no union between his brain and his finger, he may doubt the fact and deny the statement; but it is a most extraordinary fact, that the great majority of men cannot press a trigger when they like or when they ought, but miss, because they try, by retaining the aim, to make sure of it. They do not get upon the first impression, and then fire too late, and miss the object. By snapping continually at spots on a wall and at targets at various distances, men learn to squeeze the trigger at the peculiar juncture of time that is necessary; and persons who are well taught come to this point—that when they fire they know where the bullet will go. If they miss, they know why. They feel that they pulled at the wrong time, and that the finger did not obey the mind. The finger is certainly their property, but it is not subdued—it is not broken in—it is not in the "union." On remarking to a soldier that his ball has fallen short, he would sometimes say, "I never meant to pull the trigger, but it went off;" and he thinks he has a kind of right to a new cartridge. The error of most men is that they cannot make it go off soon enough.

A simple illustration of aiming may be witnessed on board a man-of-war. There you cannot retain an aim if the ship is in motion; the sailor must pull at the right time, that is, when he has got the aim: he waits for the lurch of the ship, and he tries to pull at the right time; at any other than the very time at which the man pulled he would have missed. It is precisely the same with the soldier, and his gun; he must press the trigger at the exact moment.

Thus at Hythe they teach shooting without firing ball—by merely aiming at spots on a wall, and also at objects of the same size, and at the distances at which the practices are performed, while training the finger to work in unison with the eye.

In "position drill" it is important that the trigger be pressed without the slightest jerk, and with the motion of the forefinger only at its second joint—no aid being derived from the hand or arm—the eye being fixed upon the mark during and after firing, as if it were prolonging the intention of the firer.

After this "dummy-firing," ball-cartridge is given—but merely to ascertain if the men have profited by their teaching, or to prove the efficiency of their teachers. It is proved beyond doubt that this whole system of dummy-firing produces first-rate shots—that a man becomes a marksman without having fired a shot—while, on the other hand, should the recruit fail at the test of his tuition, he is not made to blaze away with ball-cartridge until he becomes proficient. This is scouted as a most pernicious error. Without the drills, the more he fires the worse shot he becomes; so they send him back to "position drill," &c., and try him again, when he rarely fails to show better results. Those who have not witnessed the results of the training at Hythe may doubt the possibility of teaching men to shoot without firing a shot, but the fact is nevertheless certain, and it will be found to be so, if the Union adopts the system—as I trust will be the case in due season.

Each recruit in the British army fires 110 rounds of ball in the first year, and other soldiers 90; and the third-class shots fire every Winter, after receiving extra preliminary instruction, in order that every soldier may succeed in getting out of the third class. Each annual course of firing of the old soldiers, even, is always preceded by a course of preliminary drill.

The average "figure of merit" of British firing is 14.45. At 150 yards the per centage of hits is 84.09; at 400 yards it is 61.21; at 600 yards it is 40.26; at 900 yards it is 13.95. In file-firing it is 80.81; in volley-firing, 76.22; in skirmishing, 39.00.

Having witnessed the firing of the French soldiers at Vincennes, I should say that they are not generally to be compared to the British—certainly not the French infantry of the line. I saw better firing by the Chasseurs, and, doubtless, some of these battalions will equal the best of the British. The cause is evident: every Chasseur battalion has its instructor of musketry, with his staff. There is constant instruction and frequent practice, which is not the case in the French line as yet, but this deficiency will soon be supplied in the French army. Rewards and distinctions, according to a regulated scale, tend further to insure proficiency in both armies.

Lectures are also given on the whole history of small arms, from the first invention of gunpowder, and the successive steps by which the rifle-musket has attained to its present efficiency. Thus both the soldiers and the officers acquire a thorough knowledge of the subject theoretically, and take greater interest in the practical part of this most important branch of their duty.

This system of instruction has taken deep root among the British soldiers; they see the sense and the reason of it. It raises the importance and the value of the man in his own estimation, and in an honorable way. He feels himself to be a man of some consequence, that he can do something; and the result is, that the greatest punishment you could inflict upon a soldier at Hythe, would be to tell him "You shall not learn your duty; you shall not come into the lecture-room, nor go forth to shoot." The class from which soldiers are taken is fully sensible of the advantages to be derived from the mode of procedure. They acquiesce in it; they set their shoulders and their seal of approval to it; and the greatest delight of the men is to learn this most important part of their profession.

The Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, has repeatedly witnessed the firing of the soldiers at Hythe—has heard them catechized on theoretical subjects, and has expressed his high approval in the strongest terms. He has been present at the examination of officers in the theory of projectiles, the history of small arms, the history, manufacture, and properties of gunpowder; and he has witnessed the firing of the officers—which is superior to that of their men, and he highly encouraged and applauded them for having acquired the power of teaching by example.

Not long since, Gen. Sir John Bourgoyne visited Hythe, and was down upon the beach where the practicing takes place. They traced a figure on the target the size of a dragoon on horseback—namely, eight feet six inches in hight. They had a party of sixteen files of men, marching in open columns of sections, left in front. They were ordered to form line to the left, and to fire volleys by sections from left to right, at a distance of 600 yards. Each section put, on an average, from four to five bullets in man or horse at each discharge, so that before a staff-officer could pull down a spy-glass from his eye four files would put about two balls in the man and three in the horse. Sir John Bourgoyne remarked: "No cavalry or artillery can ever stand on an open plain before you." These were men who had received only one course of instruction at Hythe, and it shows what efficiency may be communicated by the systematic instruction enforced by the system at Hythe.

That firing is wholly a matter of teaching may also be proved in this way: There has never yet been a regiment that fires as well as the detachments do at Hythe, because the men at Hythe are better taught; and thus it ought to be. Nevertheless, in a short time, no doubt, the regiments of the line will equal and beat the detachments at Hythe, because they will have gone through repeated courses of instruction and practice.

In only one practice the soldiers always beat the officers, namely, in "file and volley firing," because the former are steadier in the ranks. They have more confidence in one another—the result of drill in the ranks.

People talk of the "withering Enfield rifle," "the deadly Enfield rifle," and yet the men who use those rifles are not half taught. The truth is that the capabilities of the rifle have never yet been fully developed. It is still immensely superior to the men who use it. They are yet to be trained up to an equality with their weapon.

A striking circumstance occurred in India with the force under Col. Franks. The enemy had guns in position, and thought that (according to the old English fashion) the English would "take the bull by the horns;" but that talented commander preferred conquering by mind—so he drew out his ordinary infantry, armed with the Enfield, at 600 yards, and silenced their guns in 34 minutes, and then advanced to the attack. Were a similar position to have been attacked in former days, the infantry would have had to be quiet till the enemy's guns were silenced by their own before they could dare to advance; but with the new arm, infantry, in some cases, can shut up artillery for themselves. Doubtless the day will come when infantry soldiers will silence batteries by *withdrawing*, and thus availing themselves of their vertical fire at long ranges.

The next topic of instruction is "judging distance," in order that the soldier may apply his skill. The theory of judging distance is this—they take the men out to accustom them to make observations upon the different signs and appearances of objects and figures at various known distances, in order that they may have a record of facts in their own brain, whereby they may determine the distance of other objects. It is the brain that is concerned. They place men at known, measured distances as points, the first at 50 yards, the next at 100 yards, another at 150, and so on up to 600 yards. The soldier is told to observe the man at 50 yards, and to register in his mind all particulars concerning his appearance. His attention is called to the fact that at 50 yards off he could name any man in his own regiment, as there is at this distance complete identification; for the age, complexion, hight, and figure of any man can be determined. They next place the pupil in front of the man at 100 yards, and make him notice those parts which he can still perceive at this distance, and those which he can no longer perceive. Thus they proceed up to 600 yards, when it will be observed that at certain distances men appear to have no eyes, or necks; the head looks like a ball stuck upon the shoulders, which are then never square, but sloped off; flesh is not visible. Obviously each observer, according to the state of his eyesight, will make his own peculiar observations at all the various distances, with perhaps one or two salient points to determine the distance—in addition to the general suggestions of the instructor applicable to an average eyesight.

The objects are then placed at unknown distances, in order to test the knowledge acquired, and after recording the guesses of each, all are marched to the object, the space being measured by a chain, or the distance is at once determined by a stadia—an instrument invented for that purpose by one of the sergeant-instructors of Hythe.

Some persons may be slow to admit the possibility of such a course of drill succeeding; but are there any men or people who can judge distances? When a savage wants to fire from a bow, though he may not know the meaning of the word "elevation," or anything of the laws of gravitation, which necessitate it, he knows that he must give his arrow a rise in the air suited to the distance of his object. His life—his very existence—depends upon his knowledge of judging distances, and his adroitness in applying that knowledge. He has received certain impressions in his own mind, which enable him so to direct his arrow as to destroy his adversary, or supply himself with food. Now the same faculties are latent, more or less, in all men; indeed, perhaps they are capable of even greater development in the higher than the lower races of men. Certain it is, however, that very good judges of distance are made by this system of instruction. Registers are kept, by which a spirit of emulation is created. Those who cannot judge with a certain amount of accuracy up to 300 yards remain in the third class; those who cannot succeed up to 600 yards, remain in the second class; but those who judge with accuracy from 100 to 600 yards, get into the first class; and prizes to the best shots are only given to men in the first class of judging distance, and such as are otherwise generally intelligent. To show how the thing can be done, it is certain that out of 107 officers at Hythe, 90 got into the first class, 17 into the second, and none were left in the third—that is to say, that out of 100 officers, 84 per cent could judge distances between 100 and 1,000 yards. Again, out of 555 soldiers taken indiscriminately, 473 got into the first class, 107 into the second, and only 15 remained in the third class—the average being 84 per cent of officers against 79 per cent of men. This, of course, was only from one short course of instruction.

Unquestionably it is essential for an officer to be a good judge of distance. He has to direct the soldiers as to the distance for which they must adjust their sights. In the British army no firing ever takes place without the preliminary caution, "At so many hundred yards—Ready!" If there be random firing it is no fault of the "regulations."

However, although it is a necessary qualification of a soldier, and very desirable that he should have the power of determining the distances of objects, in order to adjust the sights of his rifle correctly, yet it is very satisfactory to know that we are not absolutely dependent upon every soldier knowing the exact distance of an object; for from the nature of the trajectory or path of the bullet, we are, to a certain extent, rendered independent—that is, we may hit somewhere. For instance, in firing at an object one hundred yards off, with an Enfield rifle, supposing the hight of the shoulder to be four feet six inches, and the object aimed at three feet above the ground; in this case, should the soldier know nothing of distance, provided that the man is not more than 156 yards off, he could not miss some part of him. If close, he would, of course, strike him about four feet six inches above the level of the ground; if he turns out to be 195 yards off, then he would break his shins. This results from the course of the bullet's path until it reaches the ground.

The culminating or highest point of a bullet is rather more than half way of its course. With the 200 yards sight, the greatest hight of the bullet will be about 5 feet 4 inches when it has proceeded about 100 yards, and its first graze of the ground will be about 280 yards. Hence, if the rifle be only held straight and otherwise in accordance with the regulations of musketry, some part of a man must be struck, higher or lower, in the whole distance of 280 yards; provided he be five feet four inches in hight.

With the elevation for 300 yards, the greatest height of the ball is about seven feet from the ground, and its first graze at about 370 yards. We are taught that the height of a dragoon on horseback is eight feet six inches; let us, therefore, adjust our sight for 300 yards. Calmly suffer your enemy to approach within the 370 yards, and you then have a dragoon under the power of your rifle from that distance until he reaches the muzzle; again, however, provided you conform strictly with the rules of firing.

An officer of the 34th Regiment, who was at the unhappy Sepoy business at Cawnpore, stated that upon one occasion some of the enemy's cavalry came round the flank and took by surprise a small party of his men who were skirmishing. They immediately formed "rallying-square;" the horsemen turned tail and his men delivered a volley, when both dragoons and horses fell to the ground like a wall—every man but one bit the dust. A soldier came to the front, leveled at the fellow, and knocked him off his horse. So much for "judging distance," &c.

With the elevation for 300 yards the bullet is about 6 feet from the ground when it has proceeded about 225 yards; thus, until its first graze of 370 yards, infantry are under the command of our rifle for 145 yards. So much for teaching the soldier theory—while we insist, however, upon his conforming in every way with the rules of firing peculiar to the rifle in its perfection as taught at Hythe. Colonel Maude of the 3d Regiment states that when lying wounded in the Redan he was addressed by a Sergeant as follows: "Sir, do you see that scoundrel bayoneting an Englishman?" at the same time bringing his rifle to the "present," and knocking the Russian over. He remained beside Col. Maude for some time, and said he had dispatched no less than 16 Russians. He said to the Colonel: "I am, Sir, separated from my regiment; but I hope, if we ever get out of this, that you will speak for me, and say that I did good service." They did get out; he was spoken of, and he now holds a commission. This proves what can be done with coolness, courage, and skill. Was he better than other men? Yes, he was a taught soldier. He said to Col. Maude, "I have been at Hythe, Sir."

When great rapidity of fire is the object, it may be desirable to fire without raising the sights. The soldier is therefore taught to aim at 300 and 400 yards with the sight down. This method of dispensing with the elevating sight is occupying more attention in the British service at the present moment—the difficulty of managing the sights in the battle-field being obvious. The French use the thumb as a back sight, but this very awkward method is scarcely compatible with anything like accurate firing, and I believe it is in very small favor with the men and officers. The practice I saw was wretched—very little better than a waste of ammunition. This method is confined to the regiments of the line, the Chasseurs, Zouaves, and Turcos using their back sights on all occasions. The use of the elevating sight seems to be an essential point in the rifle, but still its great inconveniences in the shifting scene of battle seem to show the necessity for such a training as would enable the soldier to hit at the average distances without using it. I believe the thing possible.

The words of the British regulations are most emphatic as to the attainment of proficiency in firing. "To this great object too much care and attention cannot be devoted. The rifle is placed in the soldier's hands for the destruction of his enemy; his own safety depends upon his efficient use of it; it cannot, therefore, be too strongly inculcated, that every man who has no defect in his eyes, may be made a good shot; and that no degree of perfection he may have attained in the other parts of his drill, can, upon service, remedy any want of proficiency in this; in fact, all his other instructions in marching and manoeuvering can do no more than place him in the best possible situation for using his weapon with effect. *A soldier who cannot shoot is useless, and an incumbrance to the battalion.*"

FEMALE TRAITORS IN WASHINGTON.

Correspondence of The Philadelphia Press.

WASHINGTON, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 1862.

This morning, it was rumored that the female prisoners confined in the Sixteenth-street Prison were to be removed to the Old Capitol Prison, where, in consequence of their rebellious proclivities, quarters have been prepared for them. Accordingly, we visited Lieut. N. E. Sheldon, a native of New-York, and an officer of the Sturgess Rifles, the body-guard of Gen. McClellan during his campaign in Western Virginia, who, for some time past, has been detailed as the guard of these prisoners, and were admitted, after some delay, into his quarters.

It is well known that since the attempt made to rescue the prisoners at this house on the first of the year, the utmost vigilance has been displayed in the approach of visitors to this point. And hence it is that when we applied for admission at the quarters of Lieut. Sheldon, we were obliged to *halt* for a few moments, until our character and the object of our visit were ascertained. The call for the corporal was made by the guard, and our communication subsequently conveyed to the lieutenant, by whom, as we have said before, we were admitted.

As we entered the building we must confess that the emotions of our mind were sad rather than otherwise. We were perfectly cognizant of the fact that, instead of approaching the place of confinement of those who were the male enemies of the Government, we were being admitted to the presence of the *female* enemies of the law and the Constitution; and thus it was that our feelings were of the nature that we have described.

That woman should, in the hour of our struggle, desert us, and side with our enemies, was more than we expected. And when the first traitoress was arrested in this city and confined in the Sixteenth-street prison, we not only pitied, but in longings of our hearts forgave her the offense that she had committed. Such has been the history of the war, however, that not only men have been convicted of the charge arraigned against them, but women have also been as instrumental in interfering with the plans of our warfare, by giving aid and comfort to the enemy, and aiding them to escape the judgment that would have been visited upon them by the Government.

When we visited the establishment referred to, we were admitted to the parlor of the house, formerly occupied by Mrs. Greenhow, fronting on Sixteenth street. Passing through the door on the left, and we stood in the apartment alluded to. There were others who had stood here before us—we have no doubt of that—men and women of intelligence and refinement. There was a bright fire glowing on the hearth, and a *tete-a-tete* was drawn up in front. The two parlors were divided by a red gauze, and in the back room stood a handsome rosewood piano, with pearl keys, upon which the prisoner of the house, Mrs. G., and her friends, had often performed. The walls of the room were hung with portraits of friends and others—some on earth and some in heaven—one of them representing a former daughter of Mrs. Greenhow, Gertrude, a girl of seventeen or eighteen summers, with auburn hair and light-blue eyes, who died some time since.

In the picture a smile of beauty plays around the lips, and the eyes are lighted with a strange fancy—such as is often seen in the eyes of a girl just budding into womanhood.

On the east wall hangs the picture of Mrs. Fanny Moore, whose husband is now in our army, while the walls of the back room are adorned with different pictures of the men and women of our time. Just now, as we are examining pictures, there is a noise heard overhead—hardly a noise, for it is the voice of a child, soft and musical.

"That is Rose Greenhow, the daughter of Mrs. Greenhow, playing with the guard," says the lieutenant, who has noticed our distractment. "It is a strange sound here: you don't often hear it, for it is generally very quiet." And the handsome face of the lieutenant is relaxed into a shade of sadness. There are prisoners above there—no doubt of that—and may be the tones of this young child have dropped like the rains of Spring upon the leaves of the drooping flowers! A moment more, and all is quiet, and, save the stepping of the guard above, there is nothing heard.

The Sixteenth street jail has been an object of considerable interest for months past, to citizens as well as visitors. Before the windows of the upper stories were "blinded," the prisoners often appeared at these points, and were viewed by pedestrians on the other side of the way; but since the "cake affair" of New Year's Day the prisoners have been forbidden to appear at the windows, and the excitement, instead of being allayed, has been still further increased.

The first person incarcerated at the prison was Mrs. Rose O. H. Greenhow, as she styles herself. She was arrested on the 11th of August of the last year, and has been confined in the prison ever since. Her husband was formerly employed in the State Department in this city. She is a woman of letters, and was born in the South, although brought up in Washington. She is confined in her own house, in one of the upper stories, and has the attendance of a servant, besides the company of her own daughter, an interesting child of some twelve years. Beside these confined here were Mrs. Phillips, her sister, Mrs. Levy, and her two daughters, Misses Fannie and Lena. Mrs. Phillips is a Jewess, and her husband married her at Savannah, Ga. Mrs. Levy was a widow, and her husband, who was formerly in the army, died. Her two daughters are finely educated. These latter were, after being confined six weeks, sent to Fortress Monroe.

Next in turn comes Mrs. Betty A. Hassler, who was born and reared in Washington. She possessed the least education of any woman ever confined in this prison. Her husband is a Southern man. She is fascinating in appearance, but has not much decision of character. She was released on parole by order of the Secretary of war.

Mrs. Jackson, the mother of the assassin of Ellsworth, has also been confined at this point. She came here with nothing but a flannel gown on, and wearing slave shoes. She was incarcerated but two days and nights. She has now gone South, to Richmond, where she has been endeavoring, with but little success, to obtain funds for the support of her family. It is rumored that she is not able to collect enough funds to support her from day to day.

Miss Lilly Mackle, a daughter of Mackle, a clerk in one of the departments, and belonging to one of the most respectable families of Washington, was also confined here for two months.

Mrs. M. A. Onde donk, who sometimes represents herself to be a widow and sometimes a wife, was arrested in Chicago some months since, and after being confined here six weeks, was released on parole. Forty dollars were given her to pay her expenses back to Chicago, but instead of going there, she went to New-York. She was last heard of at St. Louis.

An English lady, Mrs. Elena Lowe, who was arrested at Boston, and whose son was with her, having come with a commission in the Rebel army, has also been confined in this institution. The son was afterward sent to Fort Warren, and she returned to England.

Beside the above, there were some eight or ten persons arrested at Alexandria and in this city, whose names are not remembered, and who, after being confined at this prison, were shortly afterward liberated, on taking the oath of allegiance.

Miss Ellie M. Poole, alias Stewart, was arrested and brought to the prison on the 11th of August, 1861. She came from Wheeling, where, after having been confined for some time in the prison there, she made her escape by tying the sheets together and letting herself down from the prison window. She has been in communication with the rebel leaders in Kentucky, advising them to make certain changes in their plan of operations. When arrested the second time, within ten miles of the enemy's lines in Kentucky, $7,500 of unexpended money, furnished by the rebels, was found upon her person. She has been a correspondent of *The Richmond Enquirer* and *The Baltimore Exchange*. Miss Poole is yet in confinement at the Sixteenth-street Jail.

Among the number yet confined here is Mrs. Baxley, formerly a resident of Baltimore. She was arrested on the 23d of December. She had just come from Richmond, and had been in conversation with Jeff. Davis, from whom she had obtained a commission in the Rebel army for her lover, Dr. Love. She is, as she represents herself, a very "exciting" woman, and it was from this fact that her arrest took place on board of the boat, while approaching Washington from Richmond. This woman has refused to sleep under a blanket marked "U. S." ever since her confinement here.

The above is a hurried sketch of the prisoners incarcerated, and now confined in the Sixteenth-street jail. Their quarters are of the most comfortable character, and, under the care of Lieut. Sheldon, they are furnished with everything that, saving the "Scotch" principle, can make them happy.

The report that the cake sent to Mrs. Greenhow on New-Year's came from Mrs. Douglas, to whom Mrs. G. sustains the relationship of aunt, is a mistake. The cake was sent by a party well known to the Government, upon whom a strict watch is kept.

To-day the three last named persons will probably be sent to the jail on old Capitol Hill—an old part of the Sturgess Rifles, under command of Lieut. Sheldon, being prepared to accompany them.

There was the same patter of nimble feet overhead when we left the prison. At the window, from the outside, we saw the face of Mrs. G. standing within the room above. Our voice had been heard in the room beneath, we know, as even the musical tones of the piano, that had been performed upon during our presence. There must have been a memory of other days recalled by these signs of festivity, and the hearts of some above must have beat with a quicker pulsation at the thought of the circumstances that now surrounded them.

Who knows but what then and there there were heart-strings that were almost snapped asunder, and that there were consciences that sunk beneath the weight of ignominy imposed upon them!

THE MISSISSIPPI EXPEDITION.

THE RECONNOISSANCE NEAR COLUMBUS.

A Cairo dispatch to *The Cincinnati Gazette* of date of Jan. 14, says:

"The gunboats Essex and St. Louis, and Tylor, on board of which were Com. Foote, Gen. Grant and his aid, Capt. Logan, ran down to within one mile and a half of the rebel fortifications this morning, and opened fire upon them, throwing about twenty shot and shell in their midst. The guns were slow in returning the fire, not more than a shot being thrown, which fell short.

"It is supposed that our shell did much damage. Flag officer Foote is convinced that he can reduce Columbus with but small loss, when he descends the river with the whole fleet. No torpedoes or masked batteries were discovered. If any torpedoes have been planted, the large quantities of ice now floating down the river will do them serious damage."

The following general order was promulgated to-day:

HEADQUARTERS, DISTRICT OF CAIRO, CAIRO, Jan. 13, 1862.

GENERAL ORDER NO. 3.—During the absence of the expedition, now starting upon soil occupied almost solely by the rebel army, and where it is a fair inference that every stranger met is an enemy, the following orders will be observed: Troops on marching will be kept in the ranks; company officers being held strictly accountable for all stragglers from their companies.

No firing will be allowed in camp or on the march, not strictly required in the performance of duty. While in camp, no privilege will be granted to officers or soldiers to leave their regimental grounds, and all violations of this order must be promptly and summarily punished.

Disgrace having been brought upon our brave fellows by the bad conduct of some of their members, showing on all occasions, when marching through territory occupied by sympathizers of the enemy, a total disregard of the rights of citizens, and being guilty of wanton destruction of private property, the General commanding desires and intends to force a change in this respect.

The interpreting of confiscation acts by troops themselves has a demoralizing effect—weakens them in exact proportion to the demoralization, and makes open and armed enemies of many who, from opposite treatment, would become friends, or at most non-combatants.

It is ordered, therefore, that the severest punishment be inflicted upon every soldier who is guilty of taking or destroying private property, and any commissioned officer guilty of like conduct, or of countenancing it, shall be deprived of his sword